

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 503

Orig. 1995

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Rev. 2013

503 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

[Note: The provisions of this policy substantially reflect statutory requirements.]

I. PURPOSE

- A. The school board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students, and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. It is intended to be positive and not punitive.
- B. This policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent or guardian, teacher, and administrators. This policy will assist students in attending class.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Responsibilities

1. Student's Responsibility

It is the student's right to be in school. It is also the student's responsibility to attend all assigned classes and study halls every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class or study hall. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to an absence.

2. Parent or Guardian's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to ensure the student is attending school, to inform the school in the event of a student absence, and to work cooperatively with the school and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

3. Teacher's Responsibility

It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class and study hall. It is also the teacher's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly. It is also

the teacher's responsibility to provide any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request. Finally, it is the teacher's responsibility to work cooperatively with the student's parent or guardian and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

- a. It is the administrator's responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes and study halls. It is also the administrator's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly to all students, to maintain accurate records on student attendance, and to prepare a list of the previous day's absences stating the status of each. Finally, it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the student's parent or guardian of the student's attendance and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.
- b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, the students of the school district are **REQUIRED** to attend all assigned classes and/or study halls every day school is in session, unless the student has been excused by the school board from attendance because the student has already completed state and school district standards required to graduate from high school, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Attendance Procedures

Attendance procedures shall be presented to the school board for review and approval. When approved by the school board, the attendance procedures will be included as an addendum to this policy.

1. Excused Absences

a. Your illness (5 days per semester). A note from a physician is required for each additional absence. If you become ill while at school, get a pass to the office.

1. *Long term/chronic illness/injury* – documentation from a medical professional must be obtained. The days missed because of these types of situations that are verified with a medical excuse will not be counted in the five (5) day maximum absence rule.

b. Verified medical, dental orthodontic, counseling, drivers license exam and other appointments at the discretion of school administration which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Examples of appointments which are NOT considered to be excused include: haircuts, nail appointments, pictures/portraits, car repairs, general errands, etc. Your

written excuse for medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card bearing the doctors name, and the time and date of appointment. This must be submitted to the office within three days of the appointment.

c. Conditions beyond the student's control, such as fire, flood, storm, etc. This would include inclement weather conditions, but not the following: missing the bus, not catching their ride to school, oversleeping, traffic conditions, or care problems without verification.

d. Family outing or trips taken with a parent if the principal or designee has approved the trip **in advance**. A maximum of five (5) days in one semester, not exceed ten (10) days per school year, will be excused. Approval must be obtained from the principal at least five (5) school days prior to the absence.

e. Compliance with any provision of a disabled student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

f. Active duty in any military branch of the United States.

g. Mandatory court appearances.

h. Other excused absences *may be* granted when mutually agreed upon between the parents and the administration, **prior approval must be granted by the high school office.**

Exempt Absence – the following list of items are what constitutes an exempt absence:

a. Participation in school-sponsored event. This would include attending state tournaments in which ACGC is a participant provided verification of attendance is provided upon return.

b. Suspensions.

c. College visitation arranged through the counselor's office. You must have an appointment and obtain a College/University Visitation Form **in advance**. Seniors are allowed 3 college visits.

Consequences of Excused Absences

- (1) Students whose absences are excused are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher.
- (2) Work missed because of absence must be made up within 2 days from the date of the student's return to school. Any

work not completed within this period shall result in “no credit” for the missed assignment. However, the building principal or the classroom teacher may extend the time allowed for completion of make-up work in the case of an extended illness or other extenuating circumstances.

2. Unexcused Absences

- a. Any absence which does not fall under any of the excused or exempt categories will be considered unexcused. Sleeping in or oversleeping are not considered excused absences. Additionally, an absence will be considered unexcused unless a written note by the parent or parental phone call stating a valid reason is provided to the building administration within one (1) school day of returning to school. An example of this would be if a student misses on Tuesday and returns to school on Wednesday, the student would have until 7:45 am on Thursday to have this absence addressed or it would stand as unexcused and a consequence will be assigned.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- (1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56.
- (2) Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student’s total cumulated unexcused absences.
- (3) In cases of recurring unexcused absences, the administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
- (4) If the result of a grade reduction or loss of credit has the effect of an expulsion, the school district will follow the procedure set forth in the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56.
- (5) Students who miss class work (including class assignments/assessments, labs and exams) as a result of an unexcused absence will not receive a score of more than 70% on any assignment(s)/assessment(s) or alternative assignments from the day and class in which the unexcused absence occurred.
- (6) Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to discipline in the following manner:

STUDENTS UNDER AGE 12

- 1-2 Days -Family contacted/absences clarified by school.
- 3 Days -Phone call and attendance alert letter sent to family from school.
-Family offered resources through school to help support attendance.
-School continues to track/monitor attendance.
-Progress made; no further action needed.
-No progress: truancy referral sent to Meeker County Social Services and Kandiyohi County Social Services after three unexcused absences.
- 3 or More Days -County social services contacts family/meets with family (opens social service case) to review attendance concerns; meetings can be at family's home or at school.
-County staff develops plan with family to address issues impacting attendance.
-School and county work with family to address attendance concerns.
-Progress made; school and county monitor attendance.
- At 5 Days If progress is not made:
-School send truancy letter request to county attorney.
-Letter sent from county attorney's office to family at five unexcused absences.
- 7 or More Days -No progress: referral to child protection (education neglect).
-County social services file CHIPS petition/continues to work with family of issues.

STUDENTS AGE 12 AND OLDER

- 1-2 Days -Family contacted/absences clarified (school).
- 3 Days -Phone call and attendance alert letter sent to family by school.
-Family offered resources to help support attendance.
-Attendance is tracked by school.
-If attendance improves/school supports continue
If Attendance does not improve:
-School completes truancy referral at three unexcused absences and send to Meeker County Social Services and Kandiyohi County Social Services.
- 4-6 Days -County contacts family; sets up time to meet; county

worker develops plan with family and child to address issues impacting attendance.
 -Progress being made; attendance tracked by county and school. **At five unexcused absences:** school requests county attorney to send notice to family.
 -County attorney sends letter to family outlining statute and options.
 -County and school continues to work with family/student and track attendance.

7-8 Days

At seven unexcused absences:

-County social services requests county attorney to initiate a truancy diversion meeting.
 -County attorney sends letter/contacts family for truancy meeting.
 -Meeting date/time confirmed by county social services; the goal is to meet within two weeks of initial notification.

Truancy Diversion Team Meeting

-County social services takes the lead in initiating and coordinating who will attend.
 -Family/child is met with to review child/family strengths; identify issues/concerns.
 -Plan developed to address attendance concerns.
 -Follow up: dates, tasks, persons responsible identified, timeline.
 -Progress made: team follows progress, attendance tracked.
 -Progress not made: Diversion Team follows up with child/family.

7 or More Days

If absences continue:

-Unexcused absences meets criteria for filing truancy petition.
 -Request for CHIPS petition for truancy; request can be from county social services, school or court services.
 -CHIPS petition filed.
 -Initial court date set; hearings take place; plan developed.
 -Progress made; case closed.

c. Tardiness

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.
2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness
 - a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office for an admission slip.

- b. Tardiness between periods will be submitted by the teacher.
- 3. Consequences for Tardiness
 - a. Consequences of tardiness may include detention after 4 per hour/per semester of unexcused tardies.
- d. Participation in Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored On-the-Job Training Programs
 - 1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day and any school-sponsored on-the-job training programs.
 - 2. School-initiated absences will be accepted, and participation permitted.
 - 3. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
 - 4. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a physician's statement or a statement from the student's parent or guardian clearing the student for participation that day. The note must be presented to the coach or advisor before the student participates in the activity or program.
 - 5. A student must be in school for 4 (four) hours of the day to participate in extracurricular activities.

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students and parents at the commencement of each school year. This policy shall also be available upon request in each principal's office.

IV. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. Continuing Truant

Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for:

- 1. Three days if the child is in elementary school; or
- 2. Three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 provides that the school attendance officer or other designated school official shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

1. That the child is truant;
2. That the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
3. That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
5. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the child's enrolling or resident district;
6. That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
7. That if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260;
8. That if the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 260C.201; and
9. That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

[Note: Where services and procedures under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A are available within the school district, the following provisions should also be included in the policy.]

C. Habitual Truant

1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 17 years of

age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school.

2. A school district attendance officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.05 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.24 (Reporting)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.26 (Enforcement and Prosecution)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.34 (Violations; Penalties)
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 (Notice to Parent or Guardian When Child is a Continuing Truant)
Minn. Stat. § 260C.007, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant Defined)
Minn. Stat. § 260C.201 (Dispositions; Children in Need of Protection or Services or Neglected and in Foster Care)
Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565, 95 S.Ct. 729 (1975)
Slocum v. Holton Board of Education, 429 N.W.2d 607 (Mich. App. Ct. 1988)
Campbell v. Board of Education of New Milford, 475 A.2d 289 (Conn. 1984)
Hamer v. Board of Education of Township High School District No. 113, 66 Ill. App.3d 7, 383 N.E.2d 231 (1978)
Gutierrez v. School District R-1, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)
Knight v. Board of Education, 38 Ill. App. 3d 603, 348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)
Dorsey v. Bale, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)